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Innocentius episcopus servus servorum dei venerabilibus fratribus S. Cantuariensi archiepiscopo, sancte Romane ecclesie cardinali, et suffraganeis eius salutem et apostolicam benedictionem.

MIRARI COGIMUR ET moveri[1] grave gerentes plurimum et molestum quod cum inter vos et karissimum in Christo filium nostrum I. regem Angl' illustrem pax ad honorem dei et ecclesie sit feliciter reformata dissensiones inter ipsum et quosdam magnates atque barones necnon complices eorundem dissimulastis hactenus et conniventibus oculis pertransitis, ad sopiendum illas non curantes interponere partes vestras, quamvis nullatenus ignoretis quod, nisi celeriter [a] fuerint prudenti consilio ac studio diligenti sopite, tantum ac tale scandalum eorum occasione possit accidere toti regno quod forte nequiret absque multo dispendio ac magno labore sedari, nonnullis suspicantibus et dicentibus quod super questionibus contra ipsum regem noviter suscitatis vos illis prebetis auxilium et favorem, cum temporibus clare memorie patris et fratris sui necnon ipsius usque post pacem inter vos et ipsum nostra mediante sollicitudine reformatam huiusmodi questiones non fuerint suscitate.[2] Illud autem reprobamus omnino si, quemadmodum a

Pott. 4961. *Texts.* P (12 and 13): P.R.O., Patent rolls 12 and 13 (16 John) m. 1*d*; whence *Foedera*, I. i. 127

[a] sceleriter P (12 and 13)

[1] These words were used as *incipit* at least seven times by Innocent III (and cf. no. 81 below) and had been used by Celestine III in 1194.

[2] cf. no. 74 above, with which this agrees verbally in large part. This letter clearly reflects complaints by John's envoys to the Curia. Langton had intervened when John wished to punish recalcitrant vassals

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Innocent, bishop, servant of the servants of God, to his venerable brethren, Stephen archbishop of Canterbury, cardinal of the Holy Roman Church, and his suffragans, greeting and apostolic benediction.

WE ARE FORCED TO express surprise and annoyance,[1] indeed we feel it a most grievous trouble, that, when peace to the honour of God and the Church has been happily restored between you and our well-beloved son in Christ, John illustrious king of England, you have till now ignored the differences between him and certain magnates, barons, and associates of theirs, wilfully shutting your eyes and not troubling to mediate for a settlement—although you are well aware that, unless these issues are quickly settled by wise counsel and earnest attention, such a great scandal may thereby befall the whole kingdom as could not be ended without great expense and labour: some indeed suspect and state that, in the issues recently raised with the king, you are giving help and favour to his opponents, for such issues were never raised in the reigns of his father and brother of famous memory, nor in his own reign until after the restoration of peace between you and him at our mediation.[2] We utterly condemn it if, as many allege,

in September 1213 and is said to have set before the barons Henry I's coronation-charter, as something to fight for, in August 1213. Walter of Coventry speaks of the barons' respect for Langton in the early months of 1215, and also emphasises the influence of Eustace, bishop of Ely (who died 3 February 1215). Giles de Braose, bishop of Hereford, had family reasons for siding with the opposition to King John.

multis asseritur, conspiraciones aut coniurationes fecerint ausu temerario contra ipsum quodque cum armis irreverenter et indevote repetere presumpserunt que cum humilitate ac devocione, si opus esset, repetere debuissent. Ne igitur ipsius bonum propositum huiusmodi occasionibus valeat impediri, fraternitatem vestram rogamus et exhortamur in domino, per apostolica vobis scripta precipiendo mandantes, quatinus ad reformandam inter utrosque concordiam diligens studium impendatis et operam efficacem, omnes coniuraciones et conspiraciones presumptas a tempore suborte discordie inter regnum et sacerdocium apostolica denunciantes auctoritate cassatas et per excommunicacionis sentenciam inhibentes ne talia de cetero presumantur,[a] prefatos nobiles monendo prudenter et efficaciter iniungendo ut per manifesta devocionis et humilitatis indicia ipsum regem sibi placare ac reconciliare procurent, exhibentes ei servicia consueta, que ipsi et predecessores eorum [b] sibi et suis predecessoribus impenderunt.[c] Ac deinde, si quid ab eo duxerint postulandum, non insolenter sed reverenter implorent regalem ei conservantes honorem ut sic quod intendunt valeant facilius optinere. Nos enim eundem regem rogamus et obsecramus in domino, in remissionem sibi peccaminum iniungentes, quatinus predictos nobiles benigne pertractet et iustas peticiones eorum clementer admittat ut et ipsi congaudentes congnoscant eum, divina gratia faciente, in meliorem statum esse mutatum ac per hoc ipsi et heredes eorum sibi et successoribus suis prompcius et devocius debeant famulari.

Dat' Laterani, xiiii kal. Aprilis pontificatus nostri anno octavodecimo.

[b] *om.* eorum P (12 and 13)
[c] impenderunt (cf. no. 74); impendant P (12 and 13)

they have dared to form leagues or conspiracies against him and presumed arrogantly and disloyally by force of arms to make claims which, if necessary, they ought to have made in humility and loyal devotion. Lest, therefore, the king's good intention should be thwarted for reasons of this kind, we request and exhort you in the Lord, directing and commanding you by apostolic letter, to devote earnest attention and energetic effort to restoring agreement between the parties: by apostolic authority we denounce as void all leagues and conspiracies set on foot since the outbreak of dissension between the kingdom and the priesthood, and under sentence of excommunication we forbid the hatching of such plots in future [a]—prudently admonishing and strongly urging the said nobles to appease and reconcile the king by manifest proofs of their loyalty and submission, rendering him the customary services which they and their predecessors paid to him and his predecessors; and then, if they should decide to make a demand of him, let them implore it not arrogantly but with respect, maintaining his royal honour, so that they may the more easily gain their object. For we are requesting the king, and praying him in God's name, and enjoining it on him as he hopes to have his sins remitted, to treat the said nobles kindly and to hear their just petitions graciously, so that they too may know with rejoicing that through divine grace he has had a change of heart—in virtue of which they and their heirs ought to serve him and his successors with more willingness and devotion.

The Lateran, the 19th of March, in the eighteenth year of our Pontificate.

[a] The archbishop did not act upon this mandate, as the king complained in his letter to the pope of 29 May 1215 (*Foedera*, I. i. 129).